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A crew of seven will set a record next month for the quickest return to space.

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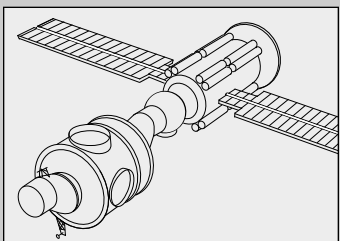
Blood drive committee wins public service award for outstanding efforts.

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The X-38 prototype spacecraft travels to California for its first flight tests.

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Astronauts gear up to train for space station assembly flights.

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Secretary earns top honors; employees enjoy STS-84 launch.

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Astronaut Jerry Linenger and his STS-84 crew mates take time out during a briefing at Space Center Houston to autograph photos for visitors. Commander Charlie Precourt, Pilot Eileen Collins, and Mission Specialists Ed Lu, Jean-François Clervoy and Carlos Noriega joined Linenger at Space Center Houston to talk about the sixth shuttle mission to dock with the Russian Mir Space Station. Linenger returned to Earth after spending more than four months on the station. Astronaut Mike Foale replaced Linenger on the Russian outpost and will return to Earth in September.

JSC Photo 97E01783 by Robert Markowitz

Astronauts change space operations jobs at JSC, KSC

Astronaut Don McMonagle will become manager for space shuttle launch integration at Kennedy Space Center, replacing Loren Shriver after the STS-85 mission.

The announcement by Space Shuttle Program Manager Tommy Holloway followed the appointment of Shriver last week to the staff of KSC Director Roy Bridges as deputy director for launch and payload processing.

McMonagle will begin the transition to his new position immediately. He will be responsible for final shuttle preparation, mission execution and return of the orbiter to KSC following landings at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

As the first manager of the then-newly

formed directorate-level position of manager, Extravehicular Activity Projects Office, McMonagle was responsible for overseeing the development of all space walk requirements, techniques and tasks for shuttle-based missions as well as assembly and operation of the International Space Station.

Astronaut Greg Harbaugh has been named acting manager of the Extravehicular Activity Projects Office, replacing McMonagle. That appointment by JSC Director George Abbey is effective immediately to allow a smooth transition between the two prior to McMonagle's move to KSC.

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Columbia passes reflight milestone

NASA's Space Shuttle Program passed a major milestone this month on its way to reflighting the orbiter *Columbia* and the first reflight of the same payload and crew in shuttle history.

Suspicious readings from one of *Columbia's* fuel cells compelled NASA managers to cut the STS-83 mission short after only four days in space, marking only the third time in shuttle history that a mission was curtailed for mechanical reasons.

Since the return of *Columbia* following the shortened STS-83 mission, the suspect fuel cell has undergone extensive analysis. The conclusion is that an undetermined and isolated incident caused a slight change in the voltage of about one-fourth of the 96 cells that make up each fuel cell.

To ensure the health of the fuel cells pre-launch, the power plants will be started earlier than usual to allow for additional monitoring before liftoff. Also, the program is reviewing the possibility of installing new fuel cell performance monitors that will indicate individual cell "health" rather than a single monitor for each of three 32-cell substacks.

This will provide additional insight into pinpointing large voltage shifts in a single cell, which could indicate a potential problem, or a small voltage shift in a number of cells, which is a benign situation. Presently, the per-

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Linenger reflects on mission

Mir stint enjoyable, challenging

By James Hartsfield

Astronaut Jerry Linenger reported a new global familiarity with the planet Earth along with a heightened appreciation for his own backyard following his four-month stay aboard the Russian Mir Space Station.

Linenger, back on Earth for fewer than three weeks following his return aboard *Atlantis* on STS-84, spoke to reporters during a June 13 press conference at JSC.

"It was a great adventure and it is something that I am very glad that I participated in," Linenger said of his long-duration mission. "The time on the station was probably more challenging than I expected but when you are busy, and they are important things that you are doing, the days do fly by. I never felt a strain of isolation or some other things that I might have anticipated."

Linenger and his cosmonaut crew mates encountered several problems, including a fire in an oxygen-generation system, leaks of coolant onboard and other mechanical troubles.

"Fixing equipment that malfunctions, repairing cooling loops and things like that, you know you have enough time to deal with those problems and you just methodically work with them," he said. "Things like the fire... those get your pulse up. But I would say... that there was no panic. You need to calm yourself down and attack the things that are at hand. You know, I slept at night. I wasn't up at night biting my fingernails. However, the next day, something else would go a little wrong and you had to work on another system."

Meanwhile, Astronaut Mike Foale wrapped up the first month of his planned four-month stay on the station in a week highlighted by the completion of repairs to a key cooling loop, while moving ahead with his agenda of on-orbit science. Foale said he's finding life on board Mir comfortable due to the absence of gravity.

"Mir is comfortable," Foale said, "mostly because you're in zero gravity and when you sleep, in particular, that's when I really appreciate the comfort. You just float in a slightly fetal-like position but in a sleeping bag that surrounds you. I've been sleeping better than I have done for years. As far as living conditions, eating and drinking, we have all the facilities and amenities here and it's pleasant. It's better than most camping trips if you would want to compare it with something."

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JSC Photo S97-07395 by Steve Candler

GRAND OPENING—JSC Director George Abbey displays one of the new shirts available at the Bldg. 3 Exchange Store with the help of Karl Schuler, chairman of the retail team that helped develop the inventory of new items and services available at the gift shop. Both stores have expanded their inventory to offer employees a wide range services including film processing. Grand opening activities conclude today.